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ABSTRACT

One of a series of papers on critical issues in vocational-technical education, this paper discusses the need for a bilingual-vocational education program in America emphasizing that oral and written language is not the only or even most important variable in developing a bilingual-vocational education program and that an understanding of the cultural background of each non-English speaking student will provide both parties (teacher and student) mutual rapport to simplify the teaching-learning process. Eight conclusions and recommendations are included for program improvement at the national level. (HD)

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THE NEED FOR BILINGUAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN AMERICA

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Introduction

There have been many books and articles written concerning the various problems vocational education has faced since its development in America. Closely related to this fact is the fact that just a few of them have considered the problem of bilingual-vocational education as one to which more concern should be devoted.

The birth and the massive development of the United States has been realized through the efforts of people of all cultures, races, creeds, and languages--a pageant of all nations. As reported by the Office of Immigration,[1] the American immigrant and his descendants have contributed brain, brawn, and inventive genius to the building of a nation which today stands unique on earth. If we do not give Americans who speak a language, other than English, equal opportunity for vocational training, we are denying the United States a willing, as well as a vital, labor force.

We need first to understand the legal definition of bilingual education set forth by the federal government, which is "that program that uses two languages, one of which is English, as a medium of instruction."[2] This seems cold and indifferent because of the lack of definition of the scope and problem that educators encounter. As educators, we all understand that oral communication is not the only major consideration that should be taken into

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[1] U. S. Office of Immigration, "Our Immigration, A Brief Account of Immigration to the United States," M-85 (Rev. 1972) y.

[2] Federal Register, Vol. No. 243, Part D-2, "Bilingual Education Training Program, December, 1975.

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account in developing a system of bilingual education. Cultural understanding is just as real and is as important as the need to communicate. Therefore, understanding the needs of such groups while bringing them into perspective with societal needs becomes paramount in importance.

In an article written by Gardner[3] in the New York University Education Quarterly, Summer 1975, he quotes Mr. Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, refering to bilingual education: "It should be clear that this kind of instruction is transitional and that children should be moved into regular instruction in English on an on-going basis, as their English language skills are strengthened. Reiterating the transitional language of bilingual education, Shanker implied that these programs should self-distruct." That is, the ultimate goal is to integrate non-English speaking children into the regular school program as quickly as possible.

There is another side to the definition of bilingual education by the Federal law and Shanker's comments as quoted by Gardner. If America still stands for the principles from which she was born and developed--Freedom--no culture by any means should try to overimpose itself and absorb the other. People as human beings will easily integrate into the American culture as contributors, but they will resist that assimilation, which to some extent would tend to deny the culture of their ancestors, family, and friends.

The main objectives of this presentation are: 1) to develop awareness among the participants of this seminar of the need of a bilingual-vocational program in America; 2) that we become aware that oral and written language is not the only or even most important variable in developing a bilingual-vocational education program; 3) that an understanding of the cultural background of each

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[3]Bruce A. Gaardner, New York University Education Quarterly, Summer, 1975, New York University, New York, New York.

non-English speaking student will provide both parties (teacher and student) mutual rapport to simplify the teaching-learning process.

The Need

America for two centuries has stood for the most beautiful principle--freedom. She has shown the world the results of the value of freedom that many people in other countries don't possess. Searching for it, many immigrants have come to these shores. People who have received political, religious, ethnic, and other types of persecutions still look to America as a promise land.

For this reason and many others, people from all over the world still look to America. During the development of this country, due to the enormous flow of immigrants and security reasons, Congress had to control immigration. But control hasn't meant closing the gates; our shores are still open to some that want to share with us their culture, abilities, and best wishes of progress. Table 1 shows the number of immigrants admitted to the United States during the fiscal year 1974 as compared to 1965. This shows us the scope of the need for providing vocational education to these newcomers as well as for others that already have made the United States their home. Training these people and their descendants to fit into America's development should be one of the goals of vocational education.

Although this table appears to show a decrease in the immigration for some countries, it also shows an increase in others. An increase of 296,697 immigrants in 1965 to 394,861 in 1974 is a significant increase, about a 33 percent increase.

Now, that which has been presented up to this point doesn't mean that we should begin developing this kind of program all over the nation. The instrumentation and development of such programs should be in accordance with the need of each region.

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TABLE 1

IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED BY COUNTRY OR REGION OF BIRTH
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 1974 AND 1965

Country of birth	Number		Percent change
	1974	1965	
All countries	394,861	296,697	+33.1
Europe	81,212	113,424	−28.4
Austria	416	1,680	−75.2
Belgium	355	1,005	−64.7
Czechoslovakia	683	1,894	−63.9
Denmark	440	1,384	−68.2
France	1,634	4,039	−59.5
Germany	6,320	24,045	−73.7
Greece	10,824	3,002	+260.6
Hungary	1,288	1,574	−18.2
Ireland	1,572	5,463	−71.2
Italy	15,884	10,821	+46.8
Netherlands	1,024	3,085	−66.8
Norway	433	2,256	−80.8
Poland	4,033	8,465	−52.4
Portugal	11,302	2,005	+463.7
Romania	1,552	1,644	−5.6
Spain	3,390	2,200	+54.1
Sweden	587	2,411	−75.7
Switzerland	534	1,984	−73.1
U.S.S.R.	1,161	1,853	−37.3
United Kingdom	10,710	27,358	−60.9
Yugoslavia	5,817	2,818	+106.4
Other Europe	1,253	2,438	−48.6
Asia	130,662	20,683	+531.7
China and Taiwan	18,056	4,057	+345.1
Hong Kong	4,629	712	+550.1
India	12,779	582	+2095.7
Iran	2,608	804	+224.4
Japan	4,860	3,180	+52.8
Korea	28,028	2,165	+1,194.6
Pakistan	2,570	187	+1274.3
Philippines	32,857	3,130	+949.7
Thailand	4,956	214	+2215.9
Vietnam	3,192	226	+1312.4
Other Asia	16,127	5,426	+197.2
North America	151,444	126,729	+19.5
Canada	7,654	38,327	−80.0
Mexico	71,586	37,969	+88.5
West Indies	62,959	37,583	+67.5
Cuba	18,929	19,760	−4.2
Dominican Republic	15,680	9,504	+65.0
Haiti	3,946	3,609	+9.3
Jamaica	12,408	1,837	+575.5
Trinidad and Tobago	6,516	485	+1243.5
Other West Indies	5,480	2,388	+129.5
Other North America	9,245	12,850	−28.1
South America	22,307	30,962	−28.0
Argentina	2,077	6,124	−66.1
Brazil	1,114	2,869	−61.2
Colombia	5,837	10,885	−46.4
Other South America	13,279	11,084	+19.8
Africa	6,182	3,383	+82.7
Oceania	3,052	1,512	+101.9
Other countries	2	4	−50.0

Table 2 shows the alien address reports--by states for 1974. This also gives us a view of the magnitude of the need for bilingual-vocational education in the certain geographical areas within the United States.

The problem is with us. It has been here for some time. Every year its magnitude increases. We, as EPDA fellows who are to hold leadership positions, how are we going to solve the problem? Do we know how to cope with it? That is our challenge!

A Search of the Literature

Apparently very little has been done in relation to projects or programs in bilingual-vocational education or it may be that what has been done has not been reported. At least this is the feeling which the writers of this paper have as a result of their search of the literature. An ERIC Search produced seven hits out of 77,291 tries. None of the seven were directly related to this topic. A review of ERIC Indexes provided some articles about projects or studies that even though they are not directly related to this topic bear some relation with it. It is the purpose of this section to familiarize the audience with the information that is available.

In 1971, Arnie Quiñenez[5] conducted a follow-up study of Spanish-American students who attended Scottsbluff, Nebraska High School during the years 1965 to 1968. She points out that vocational training and on-the-job training programs have helped many Spanish-Americans to acquire the necessary skills for better positions and that special agencies have also helped them to secure jobs in which they can utilize their abilities. In the study she asked students: What could have been done to make the in-school time more helpful? Among the male responses were: 1) vocational courses should be offered to students not planning to attend college, and 2) have necessary guidance

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[5]Arnie A. Quiñonez, A Follow-Up Study of Spanish-American Students from the Scottsbluff High School (Scottsbluff, Nebraska: June 1971).

TABLE 2

ALIEN ADDRESS REPORTS — BY STATES
1974

personnel available to students. Among the female responses were: 1) more classes in vocational training, 2) teach several courses that would prepare you for the outside work, 3) more experience with office machines, and 4) better guidance and counseling should be available to the students of the school. The following recommendations, among others, were made by the author of the study: 1) the possibility for extending or enlarging the present vocational education program to the students who do not plan to attend college should be considered, 2) students in both classes studied would probably have benefitted from more help in career planning, and 3) a bilingual counselor should be employed by the Scottsbluff High School.

In 1968, Emanuel Reiser[7] reported the results of site visits by seven observers to 30 selected counties in six states to observe migrant education. The states included were: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, New Mexico, and Texas. The seven observers from the Office of Education identified four types of assistance programs, namely: 1) Adult Literacy, 2) Food Services, 3) Health Education, and 4) Vocational Training. The most frequent available special programs were food services and health services. They found no evidence of work-study programs or cooperative arrangements with potential employers. In relation to vocational training, the observers recommended that for most migrant youth, there is a need for skill and vocational training at the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade levels due to the fact that comparatively few of the migrant youth attended school beyond this level because at age 16 their services were needed in the field to supplement the family income.

In 1973, the Olympus Research Corporation[8] conducted a study to assess cultural and linguistic variables in manpower and vocational skill training

[7] Emanuel Reiser, The Direction of Migrant Education as Revealed by Site Visits in Selected Counties of Six States (Washington: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968).

[8] Olympus Research Corporation, An Assessment of Cultural and Linguistic Variables in Manpower and Vocational Skill Training Program, (Salt Lake City, Utah, July 1, 1973).

programs. The authors' point out that cultural and language differences may be obstacles to economic success. These obstacles may deny the opportunity to demonstrate performance because of employer bias or misconception or they may impede attainment of or performance on the job. Culture and language variables might also block the acquisition of skills necessary to obtain and perform on the job. The study also recommends the following remedies, among others, for successful training: 1) materials should be prepared and staff training provided to familiarize instructors, administrators, and other staff of the training institutions of cultural differences which may lead them to misconceptions about the abilities and responses of their trainees, and 2) wherever possible, competent staff should be drawn from the same racial and ethnic groups as the majority of enrollees.

In 1972, Shirley Radcliff and Ronald Jessee[9] reported that during 1971-72 regular school year and the 1972 summer school term, approximately 168 projects were conducted with Title VII funds by local education agencies in 29 states, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Spanish was the predominant language of bilingual instruction in the projects. Of the 168 projects, 134 or 80 percent provided bilingual instruction in Spanish. Nearly 62,500 pupils participated in projects which offered bilingual instruction in Spanish, 87 percent of the participants. Some of these projects, of a vocational nature, included: health, safety, driver education, business, industrial arts, and vocational skills.

In 1972, the Division of Adult Education,[10] San Diego Community College, reported a special demonstration project entitled, "English as a Second

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[9] Shirley Radcliff and Ronald Jessee, The Bilingual Education Program, Washington: National Center for Education Statistics (DHEW), 1972).

[10] Robert S. Johnson, English as a Second Language for Job Training and Employment, (San Diego: San Diego Community College Division of Adult Education, 1972).

Language for Job Training and Employment." The course was designed for 1,000 hours of work divided into three phases: 1) Survival English, 2) English for the World of Work, and 3) Basic English for Selected Occupational Clusters. Twenty persons participated in this "job readiness" ESL, English as a Second Language, curriculum that was planned to bring the students to a proficiency level in English adequate for entry into job training and/or entry-level employment with approximately 1,000 hours of instruction. The age range of the participants was 24-50 years with a mean age of 37. The number of years of school they have had in Mexico ranged from 1 to 9 with a mean of six years.

In 1975, a project at Crossland Senior High School,[11] Camp Springs, Maryland, was reported. The title of the project was "Foreign Languages and Career Training" sponsored by the Vocational and Foreign Language Departments. This school, located at Prince George's County, has a school population of 2,300 students including a vocational wing with 17 occupational areas. Four languages are offered: French, German, Spanish, and Latin. Traditionally, the academic section and the vocational section have worked separately. The purpose of the project was to get both sections of the school to work together. The two questions asked were: 1) Why should a vocational student not study a foreign language? 2) Why should an academic student not avail himself of the opportunity to learn something of a vocational trade? In this project the foreign language classes were taught to vocational students by teams of advance foreign language students. Each team was under the direction of a teacher and and the classes were held for 30 minutes every week. Foreign language students also learned from the vocational students.

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[11] Barbara Bigelow and Norman Morrison, Foreign Languages in Career Training, (Camp Springs, Maryland: Crossland Senior High School, 1975).

In 1975, the U. S. Bureau of the Census[12] reported that the population of Spanish origin in March 1975 was a younger population than the overall population of the United States. Their median age was 20.7 years of age compared to 28.6 years for the rest of the population. This fact, of course, has implications for education, especially education for the "world of work." The report also indicates that younger persons of Spanish origin have achieve, in recent years, higher levels of educational attainment than their elders. For example, they point out that about 50 percent of Spanish origin persons 25 to 29 years of age had completed four years of high school or more, but only 24 percent of Spanish persons 55 to 64 years of age had done so. Another aspect pointed out by this report is that in March, 1975, there were about 2.2 million employed men of Spanish origin 16 years old and over in the United States, but only 10 percent of these men were working in professional and technical fields as compared to 15 percent for all employed men 16 years old and over in the United States. It was also indicated that family income was lower for Spanish origin families than for all families in the population. Specifically, median income of families with head of Spanish origin was $9,600, as compared with $12,800 for all families. The proportion of Spanish origin families with incomes of under $4,000 was 15 percent, but the proportion of all families with incomes under $4,000 was 9 percent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Initial efforts in developing bilingual vocational education had been done in isolation.
2. Due to its nature, vocational education could be the program that can best meet the interest and abilities of most of the non-English speakers.

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[12]U. S. Bureau of Census, Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, March 1975).

3. As long as the Congress admits immigrants into the United States, a program to help these people to fit into the industrial and economic development of the country should be developed.
4. A well-developed program with specific policies should be developed at the national level.
5. If we are going to profic from the experiences of others, coordination among the different institutions working on bilingual vocational programs should be done.
6. Personnel to work with this type of clientele, including teachers, counselors, and social workers, should receive special training so that they can function properly and effectively with these groups.
7. A teacher exchange program should be implemented between this country and those countries that have the major input into U. S. Immigration.
8. A leadership development training program should be initiated by universities to prepare leaders capable of organizing, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating bilingual vocational education programs.

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